

PLINY'S LAURENTINE VILLA
(SOUTH OF ROME ON THE COAST)

THE LETTERS OF PLINY

XVII

C. PLINIUS GALLO SUO S.

- 1 MIRARIS cur me Laurentinum vel (si ita mavis),
Laurens meum tanto opere delectet; desines mirari,
cum cognoveris gratiam villae, opportunitatem loci,
2 litoris spatium. Decem septem milibus passuum ab
urbe secessit, ut peractis quae agenda fuerint salvo
iam et composito die possis ibi manere. Aditur non
una via; nam et Laurentina et Ostiensis eodem
ferunt, sed Laurentina a quarto decimo lapide,
Ostiensis ab undecimo relinquenda est. Utrisque
excipit iter aliqua ex parte harenosum, iunctis paulo
gravius et longius, equo breve et molle. Varia hinc
3 atque inde facies; nam modo occurrentibus silvis via
coartatur, modo latissimis pratis diffunditur et
patescit; multi greges ovium, multa ibi eorum
boum armenta, quae montibus hieme depulsa herbis
et tepore verno nitescent. Villa usibus capax, non
4 sumptuosa tutela. Cuius in prima parte atrium frugi,
nec tamen sordidum; deinde porticus in D litterae
similitudinem circumactae, quibus parvula sed
festiva area includitur. Egregium hae adversus
tempestates receptaculum; nam specularibus ac
5 multo magis imminentibus tectis muniuntur. Est
contra medias cavaedium hilare, mox triclinium satis

¹ See plan, Volume II, p. 554.

BOOK II. XVII. 1-5

XVII

TO CLUSINIUS (?) GALLUS

You may wonder why my Laurentine place (or my Laurentian, if you like that better) is such a joy to me, but once you realize the attractions of the house itself, the amenities of its situation, and its extensive seafront, you will have your answer. It is seventeen miles from Rome, so that it is possible to spend the night there after necessary business is done, without having cut short or hurried the day's work, and it can be approached by more than one route; the roads to Laurentum and Ostia both lead in that direction, but you must leave the first at the fourteenth milestone and the other at the eleventh. Whichever way you go, the side road you take is sandy for some distance and rather heavy and slow-going if you drive, but soft and easily covered on horseback. The view on either side is full of variety, for sometimes the road narrows as it passes through the woods, and then it broadens and opens out through wide meadows where there are many flocks of sheep and herds of horses and cattle driven down from the mountains in winter to grow sleek on the pastures in the springlike climate.

The house¹ is large enough for my needs but not expensive to keep up. It opens into a hall [A], unpretentious but not without dignity, and then there are two colonnades, rounded like the letter D, which enclose a small but pleasant courtyard [B]. This makes a splendid retreat in bad weather, being protected by windows and still more by the overhanging

pulchrum, quod in litus excurrit ac si quando Africo mare impulsum est, fractis iam et novissimis fluctibus leviter adluitur. Undique valvas aut fenestras non minores valvis habet atque ita a lateribus a fronte quasi tria maria prospectat; a tergo cavaedium porticum aream porticum rursus, mox atrium silvas et
 6 longinquos respicit montes. Huius a laeva retractius paulo cubiculum est amplum, deinde aliud minus quod altera fenestra admittit orientem, occidentem altera retinet; hac et subiacens mare longius quidem
 7 sed securius intuetur. Huius cubiculi et triclinii illius obiectu includitur angulus, qui purissimum solem continet et accendit. Hoc hibernaculum, hoc etiam gymnasium meorum est; ibi omnes silent venti, exceptis qui nubilum inducunt, et serenum
 8 ante quam usum loci eripiunt. Adnectitur angulo cubiculum in hapsida curvatum, quod ambitum solis fenestris omnibus sequitur. Parieti eius in bibliothecae speciem armarium insertum est, quod non
 9 legendos libros sed lectitandos capit. Adhaeret dormitorium membrum transitu interiacente, qui suspensus et tubulatus conceptum vaporem salubri temperamento huc illuc digerit et ministrat. Reliqua pars lateris huius servorum libertorumque usibus

¹ Laurentum was primarily a winter residence: see IX. 40.

roof. Opposite the middle of it is a cheerful inner hall [c], and then a dining-room [d] which really is rather fine: it runs out towards the shore, and whenever the sea is driven inland by the south-west wind it is lightly washed by the spray of the spent breakers. It has folding doors or windows as large as the doors all round, so that at the front and sides it seems to look out on to three seas, and at the back has a view through the inner hall, the courtyard with the two colonnades, then the entrance-hall to the woods and mountains in the distance.

To the left of this and a little farther back from the sea is a large bedroom [e], and then another smaller one [f] which lets in the morning sunshine with one window and holds the last rays of the evening sun with the other; from this window too is a view of the sea beneath, this time at a safe distance. In the angle of this room and the dining-room is a corner which retains and intensifies the concentrated warmth of the sun, and this is the winter-quarters and gymnasium of my household [g] for no winds can be heard there except those which bring the rain clouds, and the place can still be used after the weather has broken.¹ Round the corner is a room built round in an apse to let in the sun as it moves round and shines in each window in turn, and with one wall fitted with shelves like a library to hold the books which I read and read again [h]. Next comes a bedroom-wing [i] on the other side of a passage which has a floor raised and fitted with pipes to receive hot steam and circulate it at a regulated temperature. The remaining rooms on this side of the house are kept for the use of my slaves and freedmen, but most

detinetur, plerisque tam mundis, ut accipere hos-
 10 pites possint. Ex alio latere cubiculum est politissi-
 mum; deinde vel cubiculum grande vel modica
 cenatio, quae plurimo sole, plurimo mari lucet; post
 hanc cubiculum cum procoetone, altitudine aestivum,
 munimentis hibernum; est enim subductum omnibus
 ventis. Huic cubiculo aliud et procoeton communi
 11 pariete iunguntur. Inde balinei cella frigidaria
 spatiosa et effusa, cuius in contrariis parietibus duo
 baptisteria velut eiecta sinuantur, abunde capacia si
 mare in proximo cogites. Adiacet unctorium, hypo-
 causton, adiacet propnigeon balinei, mox duae cellae
 magis elegantes quam sumptuosae; cohaeret calida
 piscina mirifica, ex qua natantes mare adspiciunt,
 12 nec procul sphaeristerium quod calidissimo soli
 inclinato iam die occurrit. Hic turris erigitur, sub
 qua diaetae duae, totidem in ipsa, praeterea cenatio
 quae latissimum mare longissimum litus villas amoe-
 13 nissimas possidet.¹ Est et alia turris; in hac cubi-
 culum, in quo sol nascitur conditurque; lata post
 apotheca et horreum, sub hoc triclinium, quod turbati
 maris non nisi fragorem et sonum patitur, eumque
 iam languidum ac desinentem; hortum et gesta-
 14 tionem videt, qua hortus includitur. Gestatio buxo
 aut rore marino, ubi deficit buxus, ambitur; nam

¹ possidet αγ: prospicit β.

of them are quite presentable enough to receive
 guests [j].

On the other side of the dining-room is an elegantly
 decorated bedroom [k], and then one which can either
 be a large bedroom or a moderate-sized dining-room
 [l] and enjoys the bright light of the sun reflected
 from the sea; behind is another room with an ante-
 chamber, high enough to be cool in summer and pro-
 tected as a refuge in winter, for it is sheltered from
 every wind. A similar room and antechamber are
 divided off by a single wall [m]. Then comes the
 cooling-room of the bath, which is large and spacious
 and has two curved baths built out of opposite walls;
 these are quite large enough if you consider that the
 sea is so near. Next come the oiling-room, the fur-
 nace-room, and the hot-room for the bath, and then
 two rest-rooms, beautifully decorated in a simple
 style [n], leading to the heated swimming-bath [o]
 which is much admired and from which swimmers can
 see the sea. Close by is the ball-court [p] which
 receives the full warmth of the setting sun. Here
 there is a second storey, with two living-rooms below
 and two above, as well as a dining-room which com-
 mands the whole expanse of sea and stretch of shore
 with all its lovely houses [q]. Elsewhere another
 upper storey contains a room which receives both the
 rising and setting sun, and a good-sized wine-store
 and granary behind, while below is a dining-room [r]
 where nothing is known of a high sea but the sound
 of the breakers, and even that as a dying murmur;
 it looks on to the garden and the encircling drive.

All round the drive runs a hedge of box, or rose-
 mary to fill any gaps, for box will flourish extensively

buxus, qua parte defenditur tectis, abunde viret; aperto caelo apertoque vento et quamquam longin-
 15 qua aspergine maris inarescit. Adiacet gestationi in-
 teriore circumitu vinea¹ tenera et umbrosa, nudisque
 etiam pedibus mollis et cedens. Hortum morus et
 ficus frequens vestit, quarum arborum illa vel maxime
 ferax terra est, malignior ceteris. Hac non deteriore
 quam maris facie cenatio remota a mari fruitur,
 cingitur diaetis duabus a tergo, quarum fenestris
 subiacet vestibulum villae et hortus alius pinguis et
 16 rusticus. Hinc cryptoporticus prope publici operis
 extenditur. Utrunque fenestrae, a mari plures, ab
 horto singulae sed alternis² pauciores. Hae cum
 serenae dies et immotus, omnes, cum hinc vel inde
 ventis inquietus, qua venti quiescunt sine iniuria
 17 patent. Ante cryptoporticum xystus violis odoratus.
 Teporem solis infusi repercussu cryptoporticus auget,
 quae ut tenet solem sic aquilonem inhibet sum-
 movetque, quantumque caloris ante tantum retro
 frigoris; similiter africanum sistit, atque ita diversis-
 simos ventos alium alio latere frangit et finit. Haec
 18 lucunditas eius hieme, maior aestate. Nam ante
 meridiem xystum, post meridiem gestationis hortique
 proximam partem umbra sua temperat, quae, ut dies
 crevit decrevitque, modo brevior modo longior hac
 19 vel illa cadit. Ipsa vero cryptoporticus tum maxime
 caret sole, cum ardentissimus culmini eius insistit.
 Ad hoc patentibus fenestris favonios accipit trans-

¹ vinea αβγ: vinea, a (tuetur Sulze): via Kukula.

² singulae sed alternis del. Stout.

¹ Not a vineyard for producing grapes; P. makes his wine in Tuscany, VIII. 2; IX. 16.

where it is sheltered by the buildings, but dries up if exposed in the open to the wind and salt spray even at a distance. Inside the inner ring of the drive is a young and shady vine pergola¹ [s], where the soil is soft and yielding even to the bare foot. The garden itself is thickly planted with mulberries and figs, trees which the soil bears very well though it is less kind to others. On this side the dining-room away from the sea has a view as lovely as that of the sea itself, while from the windows of the two rooms behind [r] it can be seen the entrance to the house and another well-stocked kitchen garden [u].

Here begins a covered arcade [v] nearly as large as a public building. It has windows on both sides, but more facing the sea, as there is one in each alternate bay on the garden side. These all stand open on a fine and windless day, and in stormy weather can safely be opened on one side or the other away from the wind. In front is a terrace [w] scented with violets. As the sun beats down, the arcade increases its heat by reflection and not only retains the sun but keeps off the north-east wind so that it is as hot in front as it is cool behind. In the same way it checks the south-west wind, thus breaking the force of winds from wholly opposite quarters by one or the other of its sides; it is pleasant in winter but still more so in summer when the terrace is kept cool in the morning and the drive and nearer part of the garden in the afternoon, as its shadow falls shorter or longer on one side or the other while the day advances or declines. Inside the arcade, of course, there is least sunshine when the sun is blazing down on its roof, and as its open windows allow the western breezes to enter and

- mittitque nec umquam aere pigro et manente in-
 20 gravescit. In capite xysti, deinceps cryptoporticus
 horti, diaeta est amores mei, re vera amores: ipse
 posui. In hac heliocaminus quidem alia xystum, alia
 mare, utraque solem, cubiculum autem valvis crypto-
 21 porticum, fenestra prospicit mare. Contra parietem
 medium zotheca perquam eleganter recedit, quae
 specularibus et velis obductis reductisve modo adicitur
 cubiculo modo aufertur. Lectum et duas cathedras
 capit; a pedibus mare, a tergo villae, a capite silvae:
 tot facies locorum totidem fenestris et distinguit et
 22 miscet. Iunctum est cubiculum noctis et somni.
 Non illud voces servolorum, non maris murmur, non
 tempestatum motus non fulgurum lumen, ac ne diem
 quidem sentit, nisi fenestris apertis. Tam alti
 abditique secreti illa ratio, quod interiacens andron
 parietem cubuli hortique distinguit atque ita omnem
 23 sonum media inanitate consumit. Adplicitum est
 cubiculo hypocauston perexiguum, quod angusta
 fenestra suppositum calorem, ut ratio exigit, aut
 effundit aut retinet. Procoeton inde et cubiculum
 porrigitur in solem, quem orientem statim exceptum
 ultra meridiem oblicum quidem sed tamen servat.
 24 In hanc ego diaetam cum me recepi, abesse mihi
 etiam a villa mea videor, magnamque eius volupta-
 tem praecipue Saturnalibus capio, cum reliqua pars

¹ The week starting 17 December.

circulate, the atmosphere is never heavy with stale air.

At the far end of the terrace, the arcade and the garden is a suite of rooms [x] which are really and truly my favourites, for I had them built myself. Here is a sun-parlour facing the terrace on one side, the sea on the other, and the sun on both. There is also a bedroom which has folding doors opening on to the arcade and a window looking out on the sea. Opposite the intervening wall is a beautifully designed alcove which can be thrown into the room by folding back its glass doors and curtains, or cut off from it if they are closed: it is large enough to hold a couch and two arm-chairs, and has the sea at its foot, the neighbouring villas behind, and the woods beyond, views which can be seen separately from its many windows or blended into one. Next to it is a bedroom for use at night which neither the voices of my young slaves, the sea's murmur, nor the noise of a storm can penetrate, any more than the lightning's flash and light of day unless the shutters are open. This profound peace and seclusion are due to the dividing passage which runs between the room and the garden so that any noise is lost in the intervening space. A tiny furnace-room is built on here, and by a narrow outlet retains or circulates the heat underneath as required. Then there is an ante-room and a second bedroom, built out to face the sun and catch its rays the moment it rises, and retain them until after midday, though by then at an angle. When I retire to this suite I feel as if I have left my house altogether and much enjoy the sensation: especially during the Saturnalia¹ when the rest of the roof resounds with festive

- tecti licentia dierum festisque clamoribus personat;
 nam nec ipse meorum lusibus nec illi studiis meis
 25 obstrepunt. Haec utilitas haec amoenitas deficitur
 aqua salienti, sed puteos ac potius fontes habet; sunt
 enim in summo. Et omnino litoris illius mira
 natura: quocumque loco moveris humum, obvius et
 paratus umor occurrit, isque sincerus ac ne leviter
 26 quidem tanta maris vicinitate corruptus. Suggestunt
 adfatim ligna proximae silvae; ceteras copias Ostien-
 sis colonia ministrat. Frugi quidem homini sufficit
 etiam vicus, quem una villa discernit. In hoc balinea
 meritoria tria, magna commoditas, si forte balineum
 domi vel subitus adventus vel brevior mora calfacere
 27 dissuadeat. Litus ornant varietate gratissima nunc
 continua nunc intermissa tecta villarum, quae
 praestant multarum urbium faciem, sive mari sive
 ipso litore utare; quod non numquam longa tran-
 quillitas mollit, saepius frequens et contrarius
 28 fluctus indurat. Mare non sane pretiosis piscibus
 abundat, soleas tamen et squillas optimas egerit.
 Villa vero nostra etiam mediterraneas copias praestat,
 lac in primis; nam illuc e pascuis pecora conveniunt,
 si quando aquam umbramve sectantur.
 29 Iustisne de causis iam tibi videor incolere inhabi-
 tare diligere secessum? quem tu nimis urbanus es
 nisi concupiscis. Atque utinam concupiscas! ut
 tot tantisque dotibus villulae nostrae maxima com-
 mendatio ex tuo contubernio accedat. Vale.

¹ Vicus Augustanus. See R. Meiggs, *Roman Ostia*, p. 69, and map, p. 112.

cries in the holiday freedom, for I am not disturbing my household's merrymaking nor they my work.

Only one thing is needed to complete the amenities and beauty of the house—running water; but there are wells, or rather springs, for they are very near the surface. It is in fact a remarkable characteristic of this shore that wherever you dig you come upon water at once which is pure and not in the least brackish, although the sea is so near. The woods close by provide plenty of firewood, and the town of Ostia supplies us with everything else. There is also a village,¹ just beyond the next house, which can satisfy anyone's modest needs, and here there are three baths for hire, a great convenience if a sudden arrival or too short a stay makes us reluctant to heat up the bath at home. The sea-front gains much from the pleasing variety of the houses built either in groups or far apart; from the sea or shore these look like a number of cities. The sand on the shore is sometimes too soft for walking after a long spell of fine weather, but more often it is hardened by the constant washing of the waves. The sea has admittedly few fish of any value, but it gives us excellent soles and prawns, and all inland produce is provided by the house, especially milk: for the herds collect there from the pastures whenever they seek water and shade.

And now do you think I have a good case for making this retreat my haunt and home where I love to be? You are too polite a townsman if you don't covet it! But I hope you will, for then the many attractions of my treasured house will have another strong recommendation in your company.

PLINY'S VILLA IN TUSCANY
(NORTH OF ROME)

THE LETTERS OF PLINY

mortale aliquid parant. Nam qui voluptatibus dedit
quasi in diem vivunt, vivendi causas cotidie finiunt;
qui vero posteros cogitant, et memoriam sui operibus
extendunt, his nulla mors non repentina est, ut quae
5 semper incohatum aliquid abrumpat. Gaius quidem
Fannius, quod accidit, multo ante praesensit. Visus
est sibi per nocturnam quietem iacere in lectulo suo
compositus in habitum studentis, habere ante se
scrinium (ita solebat); mox imaginatus est venisse
Neronem, in toro resedisse, prompsisse primum librum
quem de sceleribus eius ediderat, eumque ad extre-
mum revolvisse; idem in secundo ac tertio fecisse,
6 tunc abisse. Expavit et sic interpretatus est, tam-
quam idem futurus esset scribendi finis, qui fuisset illi
7 legendi: et fuit idem. Quod me recordantem miser-
atio subit, quantum vigiliarum quantum laboris
exhauserit frustra. Occursant animo mea mortalitas
mea scripta. Nec dubito te quoque eadem cogita-
tione terreri, pro istis quae inter manus habes.
8 Proinde, dum suppetit vita, enitamur ut mors quam
paucissima quae abolere possit inveniat. Vale.

VI

C. PLINIUS DOMITIO APOLLINARI SUO S.

1 AMAVI curam et sollicitudinem tuam, quod cum
audisses me aestate Tuscos meos petiturum, ne face-
2 rem suasisti, dum putas insalubres. Est sane gravis
et pestilens ora Tuscorum, quae per litus extenditur;

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abandon themselves to pleasure and live from day to
day, their reasons for living are finished as each day
comes to an end; but for those who think of posterity
and seek to be remembered in their works, death is
always sudden as it always cuts short some unfinished
project. Fannius had in fact had a premonition long
ago of what has now happened. He dreamed in his
sleep one night that he was lying on his couch, dressed
and ready for work, and with his desk in front of him,
just as usual; then he fancied that Nero appeared,
sat down on the end of the bed, took up the first
volume Fannius had published about his crimes, and
read it through to the end; then he did the same to
the second and third volumes, after which he de-
parted. Fannius was horrified, and inferred that his
writing would end at the point where Nero stopped
reading; and so it did. When I remember this, I am
filled with pity for all the wakeful hours he spent and
the trouble he took, all in vain; and I think of my
own mortality and what I have written. Doubtless
the same thought makes you equally fearful for the
work you have in hand, so while life lasts we must see
there shall be as little as possible for death to destroy.

VI

TO DOMITIUS APOLLINARIS

I AM touched by your kind concern when you try to
dissuade me from my intention of staying in Tuscany
in summer. You think the place is unhealthy, but
while it is perfectly true that the Tuscan strip of sea-
coast is relaxing and dangerous to the health, my

sed hi procul a mari recesserunt, quin etiam Appen-
 3 nino saluberrimo montium subiacent. Atque adeo
 ut omnem pro me metum ponas, accipe temperiem
 caeli regionis situm villae amoenitatem, quae et tibi
 auditu et mihi relatu iucunda erunt.

4 Caelum est hieme frigidum et gelidum; myrtos
 oleas quaeque alia adsiduo tepore¹ laetantur, asper-
 natur ac respuit; laurum tamen patitur atque etiam
 nitidissimam profert, interdum sed non saepius quam
 5 sub urbe nostra necat. Aestatis mira clementia:
 semper aer spiritu aliquo movetur, frequentius
 6 tamen auras quam ventos habet. Hinc senes multi:
 videas avos proavosque iam iuvenum, audias fabulas
 veteres sermonesque maiorum, cumque veneris illo
 7 putes alio te saeculo natum. Regionis forma pul-
 cherrima. Imaginare amphitheatrum aliquod im-
 mensum, et quale sola rerum natura possit effingere.
 Lata et diffusa planities montibus cingitur, montes
 summa sui parte procera nemora et antiqua habent.
 8 Frequens ibi et varia venatio. Inde caeduae silvae
 cum ipso monte descendunt. Has inter pingues
 terrenique colles (neque enim facile usquam saxum
 etiam si quaeratur occurrit) planissimis campis

¹ tepore *M* (*sicut et Catanaeus*): tempore *By*.

¹ A large villa a few miles N. of Città di Castello (at Campo di Santa Fiora) has been identified as P.'s by tiles stamped

property is some distance away from the sea, and is in fact at the very foot of the Apennines, which are considered the healthiest of mountains. So to rid you of all your fears on my account, let me tell you about the climate, the countryside, and the lovely situation of my house, which will be a pleasure alike for me to tell and you to hear.¹

The climate in winter is cold and frosty, and so quite impossible for myrtles and olives and any other trees which will only flourish in a continuous mild temperature, but the laurel can grow and does very well; it is sometimes killed off by the cold, but not oftener than in the neighbourhood of Rome. The summer is wonderfully temperate, for there is always some movement of the air, more often a breeze than a real wind. Hence the number of elderly people living there—you can see the grandfathers and great-grandfathers of people who have reached their own manhood, and hear old stories and tales of the past, so that a visit here is like a return to another age.

The countryside is very beautiful. Picture to yourself a vast amphitheatre such as could only be a work of nature; the great spreading plain is ringed round by mountains, their summits crowned by ancient woods of tall trees, where there is a good deal of mixed hunting to be had.² Down the mountain slopes are timber woods interspersed with small hills of soil so rich that there is scarcely a rocky outcrop to be found; these hills are fully as fertile as the level plain

with his initials; it is in fact just over the border of Tuscany, in Umbria.

² Such as P. enjoys in I. 6.

- fertilitate non cedunt, opimamque messem serius
 9 tantum, sed non minus percoquant. Sub his per
 latus omne vineae porriguntur, unamque faciem longe
 lateque contexunt; quarum a fine imoque quasi mar-
 10 gine arbusta nascuntur. Prata inde campique,
 campi quos non nisi ingentes boves et fortissima
 aratra perfringunt: tantis glaebis tenacissimum
 solum cum primum prosecatur adsurgit, ut nono
 11 demum sulco perdometur. Prata florida et gemmea
 trifolium aliasque herbas teneras semper et mollēs et
 quasi novas alunt. Cuncta enim perennibus rivis
 nutriuntur; sed ubi aquae plurimum, palus nulla,
 quia devexa terra, quidquid liquoris accepit nec
 12 absorbit, effundit in Tiberim. Medios ille agros
 secat navium patiens omnesque fruges devehit in
 urbem, hieme dumtaxat et vere; aestate summit-
 titur immensique fluminis nomen arenti alveo deserit,
 13 autumnō resunit. Magnam capies voluptatem, si
 hunc regionis situm ex monte prospexeris. Neque
 enim terras tibi sed formam aliquam ad eximiam
 pulchritudinem pictam videberis cernere: ea varie-
 tate, ea descriptione, quocumque inciderint oculi,
 reficiuntur.
 14 Villa in colle imo sita prospicit quasi ex summo: ita
 leviter et sensim clivo fallente consurgit, ut cum
 ascendere te non putes, sentias ascendisse. A tergo
 Appenninum, sed longius habet; accipit ab hoc auras

¹ Rome is 150 miles away, which seems a long way for trans-
 port; but elsewhere P. refers to Tifernum as *oppidum*, so it is
 unlikely to be the *urbs* mentioned here.

and yield quite as rich a harvest, though it ripens
 rather later in the season. Below them the vineyards
 spreading down every slope weave their uniform
 pattern far and wide, their lower limit bordered by a
 plantation of trees. Then come the meadows and
 cornfields, where the land can be broken up only by
 heavy oxen and the strongest ploughs, for the soil is
 so stiff that it is thrown up in great clods at the first
 ploughing and is not thoroughly broken until it has
 been gone over nine times. The meadows are bright
 with flowers, covered with trefoil and other delicate
 plants which always seem soft and fresh, for every-
 thing is fed by streams which never run dry; though
 the ground is not marshy where the water collects,
 because of its downward slope, so that any surplus
 water it cannot absorb is drained off into the river
 Tiber flowing through the fields. The river is navi-
 gable, so that all produce is conveyed to Rome¹ by
 boat, but only in winter and spring—in summer its
 level falls and its dry bed has to give up its claim to
 the title of a great river until the following autumn.
 It is a great pleasure to look down on the countryside
 from the mountain, for the view seems to be a painted
 scene of unusual beauty rather than a real landscape,
 and the harmony to be found in this variety refreshes
 the eye wherever it turns.

My house is on the lower slopes of a hill but com-
 mands as good a view as if it were higher up, for the
 ground rises so gradually that the slope is imper-
 ceptible, and you find yourself at the top without
 noticing the climb. Behind it is the Apennine range,
 though some way off, so that even on a still and cloud-
 less day there is a breeze from the mountains, but one

- quamlibet sereno et placido die, non tamen acres et
 15 immodicas, sed spatio ipso lassas et infractas. Magna
 sui parte meridiem spectat aestivumque solem ab
 hora sexta, hibernum aliquanto maturius quasi
 invitat, in porticum latam et pro modo longam.¹
 Multa in hac membra, atrium etiam ex more veterum.
 16 Ante porticum xystus in plurimas species distinctus
 concisusque buxo; demissus inde pronusque pulvinus,
 cui bestiarum effigies invicem adversas buxus in-
 scripsit; acanthus in plano, mollis et paene dixerim
 17 liquidus. Ambit hunc ambulatio pressis varieque
 tonsis viridibus inclusa; ab his gestatio in modum
 circi, quae buxum multiforem humilesque et retén-
 tas manu arbusculas circumit. Omnia maceria
 muniuntur: hanc gradata buxus operit et subtrahit.
 18 Pratum inde non minus natura quam superiora illa
 arte visendum; campi deinde porro multaque alia
 19 prata et arbusta. A capite porticus triclinium ex-
 currit; valvis xystum desinentem et protinus pratum
 multumque ruris videt, fenestris hac latus xysti et
 quod prosilit villae, hac adiacentis hippodromi nemus
 20 comasque prospectat. Contra mediam fere porti-
 cum diaeta paulum recedit, cingit areolam, quae
 quattuor platanis inumbratur. Inter has marmoreo

¹ pro modo longam βγ: prominulam *M*.

which has had its force broken by the distance so that it is never cutting nor boisterous. It faces mainly south, and so from midday onwards in summer (a little earlier in winter) it seems to invite the sun into the colonnade. This is broad, and long in proportion, with several rooms opening out of it as well as the old-fashioned type of entrance hall.

In front of the colonnade is a terrace laid out with box hedges clipped into different shapes, from which a bank slopes down, also with figures of animals cut out of box facing each other on either side. On the level below there is a bed of acanthus so soft one could say it looks like water. All round is a path hedged by bushes which are trained and cut into different shapes, and then a drive, oval like a race-course, inside which are various box figures and clipped dwarf shrubs. The whole garden is enclosed by a dry-stone wall which is hidden from sight by a box hedge planted in tiers; outside is a meadow, as well worth seeing for its natural beauty as the formal garden I have described; then fields and many more meadows and woods.

From the end of the colonnade projects a dining-room: through its folding doors it looks on to the end of the terrace, the adjacent meadow, and the stretch of open country beyond, while from its windows on one side can be seen part of the terrace and the projecting wing of the house, on the other the tree-tops in the enclosure of the adjoining riding-ground. Almost opposite the middle of the colonnade is a suite of rooms set slightly back and round a small court shaded by four plane trees. In the centre a fountain plays in a marble basin, watering the plane

- labro aqua exundat circumiectasque platanos et
 21 subiecta platanis leni aspergine foveat. Est in hac
 diaeta dormitorium cubiculum quod diem clamorem
 sonum excludit, iunctaque ei¹ cotidiana amicorumque
 cenatio: areolam illam, porticus alam² eademque
 22 omnia quae porticus adspicit. Est et aliud cubiculum
 a proxima platano viride et umbrosum, marmore
 excultum podio tenus, nec cedit gratiae marmoris
 ramos insidentesque ramis aves imitata pictura.
 23 Fonticulus in hoc, in fonte crater; circa sipunculi
 plures miscent iucundissimum murmur. In cornu
 porticus amplissimum cubiculum triclinio occurrit;
 aliis fenestris xystum, aliis despicit pratum, sed ante
 piscinam, quae fenestris servit ac subiacet, strepitu
 24 visuque iucunda; nam ex edito desiliens aqua sus-
 cepta marmore albescit. Idem cubiculum hieme
 25 tepidissimum, quia plurimo sole perfunditur. Co-
 haeret hypocauston et, si dies nubilus, immisso vapore
 solis vicem supplet. Inde apodyterium balinei laxum
 et hilare excipit cella frigidaria, in qua baptisterium
 amplum atque opacum. Si natare latius aut tepidius
 velis, in area piscinā est, in proximo puteus, ex quo
 26 possis rursus adstringi, si paeniteat teporis. Frigi-
 dariae cellae conectitur media, cui sol benignissime
 praesto est; caldariae magis, prominet enim. In hac
 tres descensiones, duae in sole, tertia a sole longius,
 27 a luce non longius. Apodyterio superpositum est

¹ ei β: et My.

² porticus alam Ios. Martin: -cum aliam M: -cus alia β:
 om. γ.

trees round it and the ground beneath them with its light spray. In this suite is a bedroom which no daylight, voice, nor sound can penetrate, and next to it an informal dining-room where I entertain my personal friends; it looks on to the small courtyard, a wing of the colonnade, and the view from the colonnade. There is also another bedroom, green and shady from the nearest plane tree, which has walls decorated with marble up to the ceiling and a fresco (which is no less attractive) of birds perched on the branches of trees. Here is a small fountain with a bowl surrounded by tiny jets which together make a lovely murmuring sound. At the corner of the colonnade is a large bedroom facing the dining-room; some windows look out on to the terrace, others on to the meadow, while just below the windows in front is an ornamental pool, a pleasure both to see and to hear, with its water falling from a height and foaming white when it strikes the marble. This room is very warm in winter since it is bathed in sunshine, and on a cloudy day hot steam from the adjacent furnace-room serves instead. Then you pass through a large and cheerful dressing-room, belonging to the bath, to the cooling-room, which contains a good-sized shady swimming-bath. If you want more space to swim or warmer water, there is a pool in the courtyard and a well near it to tone you up with cold water when you have had enough of the warm. Next to the cooling-room is a temperate one which enjoys the sun's kindly warmth, though not as much as the hot room which is built out in a bay. This contains three plunging-baths, two full in the sun and one in the shade, though still in the light. Over the dressing-room is

sphaeristerium, quod plura genera exercitationis pluresque circulos capit. Non procul a balineo scalae, quae in cryptoporticum ferunt prius ad diaetas tres. Harum alia areolae illi, in qua platani quattuor, alia prato, alia vineis imminet diversasque eaeli partes ut
 28 prospectus habet. In summa cryptoporticu cubiculum ex ipsa cryptoporticu excisum, quod hippodromum vineas montes intuetur. Iungitur cubiculum obvium soli, maxime hiberno. Hinc oritur diaeta, quae villae hippodromum adnectit. Haec facies, hic usus a fronte.

29 A latere aestiva cryptoporticus in edito posita, quae non adspicere vineas sed tangere videtur. In media triclinium saluberrimum adflatum ex Appenninis vallibus recipit; post latissimis fenestris vineas, valvis aequae vineas sed per cryptoporticum quasi
 30 admittit. A latere triclinii quod fenestris caret, scalae convivio utilia secretiore ambitu suggerunt. In fine cubiculum, cui non minus iucundum prospectum cryptoporticus ipsa quam vineae praebent. Subest cryptoporticus subterraneae similis; aestate incluso frigore riget contentaque aere suo nec desi-
 31 derat auras nec admittit. Post utramque cryptoporticum, unde triclinium desinit, incipit porticus ante medium diem hiberna, inclinato die aestiva. Hac adeuntur diaetae duae, quarum in altera cubi-

built the ball court, and this is large enough for several sets of players to take different kinds of exercise. Not far from the bath is a staircase leading to three suites of rooms and then to a covered arcade. One looks on to the small court with the four plane trees, another on to the meadow, and the third faces the vineyard and has an uninterrupted view across the sky. The head of the arcade is divided off as a bedroom, from which can be seen the riding-ground, the vineyard, and the mountains. Next to it is another room which has plenty of sun, especially in winter, and then comes a suite which connects the riding-ground with the house. That is the appearance and lay-out of the front of the house.

Down the side is a covered arcade for summer use which is built on higher ground and seems not to look down on but be actually touching the vineyard below; half-way along is a dining-room which receives the fresh breezes blowing down the Apennine valleys. Its broad windows at the back look on to the vineyard, and so do its folding doors, but through the arcade between, and along the side where there are no windows, there is a private staircase which is used for serving at dinner parties. At the far end is a bedroom with a view of the arcade as pleasant as that of the vineyard. Underneath runs a semi-underground arcade which never loses its icy temperature in summer and is airy enough not to need to admit the outside air. Next to both these arcades begins an open one where the dining-room ends, which is cool before noon but hot during the later part of the day. It leads to two suites, one

cula quattuor, altera tria ut circumit sol aut sole utuntur aut umbra.

- 32 Hanc dispositionem amoenitatemque tectorum longe longeque praecedit hippodromus. Medius patescit statimque intrantium oculis totus offertur, platanis circumitur; illae hedera vestiuntur utque summae suis ita imae alienis frondibus virent. Hedera truncum et ramos pererrat vicinasque platanos transitu suo copulat. Has buxus interiacet; exteriores buxos circumvenit laurus, umbraeque
33 platanorum suam confert. Rectus hic hippodromi limes in extrema parte hemicyclio frangitur mutatque faciem: cupressis ambitur et tegitur, densiore umbra opacior nigriorque; interioribus circulis (sunt enim
34 plures) purissimum diem recipit. Inde etiam rosas effert, umbrarumque frigus non ingrato sole distinguit. Finito vario illo multiplicique curvamine recto limiti redditur nec huic uni, nam viae plures intercedentibus
35 buxis dividuntur. Alibi pratulum, alibi ipsa buxus intervenit in formas mille descripta, litteras interdum, quae modo nomen domini dicunt modo artificis: alternis metulae surgunt, alternis inserta sunt poma, et in opere urbanissimo subita velut inlati ruris imitatio. Medium spatium brevioribus utrimque plat-
36 anis adornatur. Post has acanthus hinc inde lubricus et flexuosus, deinde plures figurae pluraque nomina.

of four and the other of three bedrooms, which are alternately sunny or shady as the sun moves round.

The design and beauty of the buildings are greatly surpassed by the riding-ground. The centre is quite open so that the whole extent of the course can be seen as one enters. It is planted round with ivy-clad plane trees, green with their own leaves above, and below with the ivy which climbs over trunk and branch and links tree to tree as it spreads across them. Box shrubs grow between the plane trees, and outside there is a ring of laurel bushes which add their shade to that of the planes. Here the straight part of the course ends, curves round in a semicircle, and changes its appearance, becoming darker and more densely shaded by the cypress trees planted round to shelter it, whereas the inner circuits—for there are several—are in open sunshine; roses grow there and the cool shadow alternates with the pleasant warmth of the sun. At the end of the winding alleys of the rounded end of the course you return to the straight path, or rather paths, for there are several separated by intervening box hedges. Between the grass lawns here and there are box shrubs clipped into innumerable shapes, some being letters which spell the gardener's name or his master's; small obelisks of box alternate with fruit trees, and then suddenly in the midst of this ornamental scene is what looks like a piece of rural country planted there. The open space in the middle is set off by low plane trees planted on each side; farther off are acanthuses with their flexible glossy leaves, then more box figures and names.

In capite stibadium candido marmore vite protegitur; vitem quattuor columellae Carystiae subeunt. Ex stibadio aqua velut expressa cubantium pondere sipunculis effluit, cavato lapide suscipitur, gracili marmore continetur atque ita occulte temperatur, ut
 37 impleat nec redundet. Gustatorium graviorque cena margini imponitur, levior naucularum et avium figuris innatans circumit. Contra fons egerit aquam et recipit; nam expulsa in altum in se cadit iunctisque hiatibus et absorbetur et tollitur. E regione stibadii adversum cubiculum tantum stibadio reddit
 38 ornatus, quantum accipit ab illo. Marmore splendet, valvis in viridia prominet et exit, alia viridia superioribus inferioribusque fenestris suspicit despicitque. Mox zothecula refugit quasi in cubiculum idem atque aliud. Lectus hic et undique fenestrae, et
 39 tamen lumen obscurum umbra premente. Nam laetissima vitis per omne tectum in culmen nititur et ascendit. Non secus ibi quam in nemore iaceas, imbrem tantum tamquam in nemore non sentias.
 40 Hic quoque fons nascitur simulque subducitur. Sunt locis pluribus disposita sedilia e marmore, quae ambulatione fessos ut cubiculum ipsum iuvant. Fonticuli sedilibus adiacent; per totum hippodromum inducti¹ strepunt rivi, et qua manus duxit

¹ inducti γ: inductis fistulis F: dulces M.

At the upper end of the course is a curved dining-seat of white marble, shaded by a vine trained over four slender pillars of Carystian marble. Water gushes out through pipes from under the seat as if pressed out by the weight of people sitting there, is caught in a stone cistern and then held in a finely-worked marble basin which is regulated by a hidden device so as to remain full without overflowing. The preliminaries and main dishes for dinner are placed on the edge of the basin, while the lighter ones float about in vessels shaped like birds or little boats. A fountain opposite plays and catches its water, throwing it high in the air so that it falls back into the basin, where it is played again at once through a jet connected with the inlet. Facing the seat is a bedroom which contributes as much beauty to the scene as it gains from its position. It is built of shining white marble, extended by folding doors which open straight out into greenery; its upper and lower windows all look out into more greenery above and below. A small alcove which is part of the room but separated from it contains a bed, and although it has windows in all its walls, the light inside is dimmed by the dense shade of a flourishing vine which climbs over the whole building up to the roof. There you can lie and imagine you are in a wood, but without the risk of rain. Here too a fountain rises and disappears underground; while here and there are marble chairs which anyone tired with walking appreciates as much as the building itself. By every chair is a tiny fountain, and throughout the riding-ground can be heard the sound of the streams directed into it, the flow of which can be controlled by hand to water one part of

sequuntur: his nunc illa viridia, nunc haec, interdum simul omnia lavantur.

- 41 Vitassem iam dudum ne viderer argutior, nisi proposuissem omnes angulos tecum epistula circumire. Neque enim verebar ne laboriosum esset legenti tibi, quod visenti non fuisset, praesertim cum interquiescere, si liberet, depositaque epistula quasi residere saepius posses. Praeterea indulsi amori meo; amo enim, quae maxima ex parte ipse incohavi
42 aut incohata percolui. In summa (cur enim non aperiam tibi vel iudicium meum vel errorem?) primum ego officium scriptoris existimo, titulum suum legat atque identidem interroget se quid coeperit scribere, sciatque si materiae immoratur non esse longum, longissimum si aliquid accersit atque attra-
43 hit. Vides quot versibus Homerus, quot Vergilius arma hic Aeneae Achillis ille describat; brevis tamen uterque est quia facit quod instituit. Vides ut Aratus minutissima etiam sidera consecetur et colligat; modum tamen servat. Non enim excursus
44 hic eius, sed opus ipsum est. Similiter nos ut "parva magnis," cum totam villam oculis tuis subicere conamur, si nihil inductum et quasi devium loquimur, non epistula quae describit sed villa quae describitur magna est.

the garden or another or sometimes the whole at once.

I should have been trying long ago not to say too much, had I not suggested that this letter should take you into every corner of the place. I don't imagine you will find it tiresome to read about a spot which could hardly tire you on a visit, especially as you have more opportunities if you want an occasional rest, and can take a seat, so to speak, by putting down the letter. Besides, I have been indulging the love I have for all the places I have largely laid out myself or where I have perfected an earlier design. In short (for why should I not state my opinion, right or wrong?) I think a writer's first duty is to read his title, to keep on asking himself what he set out to say, and to realize that he will not say too much if he sticks to his theme, though he certainly will if he brings in extraneous matter. You know the number of lines Homer and Virgil devote to their descriptions of the arms of Achilles and Aeneas:¹ yet neither passage seems long because both poets are carrying out their original intention. You see too how Aratus traces and tabulates the smallest stars,² but because this is his main subject and not a digression his work does not lack proportion. It is the same with me, if I may "compare small things with great."³ I am trying to set my entire house before your eyes, so, if I introduce nothing irrelevant, it is the house I describe which is extensive, not the letter describing it.

¹ *Iliad* XVIII. 475 ff. and *Aeneid* VIII. 620 ff.

² In his astronomical poem, *Phaenomena*.

³ Virgil, *Georgics* IV. 176.

Verum illuc unde coepi, ne secundum legem meam iure reprehendar, si longior fuero in hoc in quod excessi.
 45 Habes causas cur ego Tuscos meos Tusculanis Tiburtinis Praenestinisque praeponam. Nam super illa quae rettuli, altius ibi otium et pinguius eoque securius: nulla necessitas togae, nemo accersitor ex proximo, placida omnia et quiescentia, quod ipsum salubritati regionis ut purius caelum, ut aer liquidior
 46 accedit. Ibi animo, ibi corpore maxime valeo. Nam studiis animum, venatu corpus exerceo. Mei quoque nusquam salubrius degunt; usque adhuc certe neminem ex iis quos eduxeram mecum, (venia sit dicto) ibi amisi. Di modo in posterum hoc mihi gaudium, hanc gloriam loco servent! Vale.

VII

C. PLINIUS CALVISIO RUFO SUO S.

1 Nec heredem institui nec praecipere posse rem publicam constat; Saturninus autem, qui nos reliquit heredes, quadrantem rei publicae nostrae, deinde pro quadrante praeceptionem quadringentorum milium dedit. Hoc si ius adspicias inritum, si defuncti

¹ In Latium (Frascati, Tivoli, Palestrina). These are fashionable places for a country seat; P. does not own property there himself.

² A town was still legally *persona incerta* and so incapable of inheriting, though Nerva had relaxed the law and there had been exceptions in the past: e.g. Massilia in 25 (Tac. Ann. IV.

But to return to my starting-point—for I shall justly be censured under my own law if I pursue this digression further—these are my reasons for preferring my home in Tuscany to one in Tusculum, Tibur, or Praeneste.¹ And I can add another reason: I can enjoy a profounder peace there, more comfort, and fewer cares; I need never wear a formal toga and there are no neighbours to disturb me; everywhere there is peace and quiet, which adds as much to the healthiness of the place as the clear sky and pure air. There I enjoy the best of health, both mental and physical, for I keep my mind in training with work and my body with hunting. My servants too are healthier here than anywhere else; up to the present I have not lost a single one of those I brought here with me—may I be forgiven for saying so, and may the gods continue to make this the pride of the place and a joy to me.

VII

TO CALVISIUS RUFO

It is well known that a corporation cannot be made heir to an estate nor receive a preliminary legacy,² but Saturninus, who has made me his heir, left a fourth part of his estate to our native town of Comum, and later changed this to a preliminary legacy of 400,000 sesterces. This is null and void from the legal point of view, but clearly valid if one looks to

43). *Praeceptio* was a form devised to enable a testator to leave a specific object to an heir, as normally an inheritance was divided between heirs on a cost evaluation.

PLINY'S VILLA ON LAKE COMO (NORTHER ITALY)

THE LETTERS OF PLINY

BOOK IX. VI. I-VII. 3

- nihil varium, nihil quod non semel spectasse sufficiat.
- 2 Quo magis miror tot milia virorum tam pueriliter identidem cupere currentes equos, insistentes curribus homines videre. Si tamen aut velocitate eorum aut hominum arte traherentur, esset ratio non nulla; nunc favent panno pannum amant, et si in ipso cursu medioque certamine hic color illuc ille huc transferatur, studium favorque transibit, et repente agitadores illos equos illos, quos procul noscitant, quorum clamitant nomina relinquunt. Tanta gratia tanta auctoritas in una vilissima tunica, mitto apud vulgus, quod vilius tunica, sed apud quosdam graves homines; quos ego cum recorder, in re inani frigida adsidua, tam insatiabiliter desiderare, capio aliquam voluptatem, quod hac voluptate non capior.
- 4 Ac per hos dies libentissime otium meum in litteris colloco, quos alii otiosissimis occupationibus perdunt. Vale.

VII

C. PLINIUS ROMANO SUO S.

- 1 AEDIFICARE te scribis. Bene est, inveni patrocini-um; aedifico enim iam ratione quia tecum. Nam hoc quoque non dissimile quod ad mare tu, ego ad Larium lacum. Huius in litore plures meae villae, sed duae maxime ut¹ delectant ita exercent. Altera

¹ maxime ut *M*: ut maxime *γ*.

them: once seen is enough, so it surprises me all the more that so many thousands of adult men should have such a childish passion for watching galloping horses and drivers standing in chariots, over and over again. If they were attracted by the speed of the horses or the drivers' skill one could account for it, but in fact it is the racing-colours they really support and care about, and if the colours were to be exchanged in mid-course during a race, they would transfer their favour and enthusiasm and rapidly desert the famous drivers and horses whose names they shout as they recognize them from afar. Such is the popularity and importance of a worthless shirt—I don't mean with the crowd, which is worth less than the shirt, but with certain serious individuals. When I think how this futile, tedious, monotonous business can keep them sitting endlessly in their seats, I take pleasure in the fact that their pleasure is not mine. And I have been very glad to make good use of my idle hours with literary work during these days which others have wasted in the idlest of occupations.

VII

TO VOCONIUS ROMANUS

I AM delighted to hear you are building; now I can count on you to plead my case, and be justified in my own plans if you are building too. We have a further point in common—you are building by the sea and I on the shores of Lake Como. There I have several houses, two of which give me a lot of pleasure but a

imposita saxis more Baiano lacum prospicit, altera
 aequè more Baiano lacum tangit. Itaque illam
 tragoediam, hanc adpellare comoediam soleo, illam
 quod quasi cothurnis, hanc quod quasi socculis sus-
 tinetur. Sua utrique amoenitas, et utraque possi-
 4 denti ipsa diversitate iucundior. Haec lacu propius,
 illa latius utitur; haec unum sinum molli curvamine
 amplectitur, illa editissimo dorso duos dirimit; illic
 recta gestatio longo limite super litus extenditur, hic
 spatiosissimo xysto leviter inflectitur; illa fluctus
 non sentit haec frangit; ex illa possis despicere pis-
 cantes, ex hac ipse piscari, hamumque de cubiculo ac
 paene etiam de lectulo ut e naucula iacere. Hae mihi
 causae utrique quae desunt adstruendi ob ea quae
 5 supersunt. Etsi quid ego rationem tibi? apud quem
 pro ratione erit idem facere. Vale.

VIII

C. PLINIUS AUOURINO SUO S.

1 Si laudatus a te laudare te coepero, vereor ne non
 tam proferre iudicium meum quam referre gratiam
 videar. Sed licet videar, omnia scripta tua pulcher-
 2 rima existimo, maxime tamen illa de nobis. Accidit

¹ The popular resort on the coast of Campania.

² See IV. 27. 4.

corresponding amount of work. One is built on the
 rocks with a view over the lake, like the houses at
 Baiae,¹ the other stands on the very edge of the water
 in the same style, and so I have named one Tragedy,
 because it seems to be raised on actor's boots, and
 the other Comedy, because it wears low shoes. Each
 has its special charm and seems the more attractive
 to the occupant by contrast with the other. The
 former has a wider view of the lake, the latter a
 closer one, as it is built to curve gradually round a
 single bay, following its line by a broad terrace;
 while the other stands on a high ridge dividing two
 bays, where a straight drive extends for some dis-
 tance above the shore. One is untouched by the
 water and you can look down from its height to the
 fishermen below, while the waves break against the
 other and you can fish from it yourself, casting your
 line from your bedroom window and practically from
 your bed as if you were in a boat. All these existing
 amenities give me a reason for building necessary
 additions on to both houses; though I know I need
 not explain myself to you, when this is no more than
 you are doing yourself.

VIII

To SENTIUS AUGURINUS

If I begin praising you after your praise of me,²
 I fear I shall look as though I am only showing grati-
 tude instead of giving a true opinion. All the same,
 I do think all your written works are very fine, but
 especially those which deal with me. For this there

hoc una eademque de causa. Nam et tu, quae de amicis, optime scribis, et ego, quae de me, ut optima lego. Vale.

IX

C. PLINIUS COLONO SUO S.

1 UNICE probo quod Pompei Quintiani morte tam dolenter adficeris, ut amissi caritatem desiderio extendas, non ut plerique qui tantum viventes amant seu potius amare se simulant, ac ne simulant quidem nisi quos florentes vident; nam miserorum non secus ac defunctorum, obliviscuntur. Sed tibi perennis fides tantaque in amore constantia, ut finiri nisi tua morte non possit. Et hercule is fuit Quintianus, quem diligi deceat ipsius exemplo. Felices amabat, miseros tuebatur, desiderabat amissos. Iam illa quanta probitas in ore, quanta in sermone cunctatio, quam pari libra gravitas comitasque! quod studium litterarum, quod iudicium! qua pietate cum dissimilimo patre vivebat! quam non obstabat illi, quo minus 3 vir optimus videretur, quod erat optimus filius! Sed quid dolorem tuum exulcero? Quamquam sic amasti iuvenem ut hoc potius quam de illo sileri velis, a me praesertim cuius praedicatione putas vitam eius

is one and the same reason—you are at your best in writing about your friends, and I find it your best when it is about myself.

IX

To COLONUS

I VERY much appreciate your grief at the death of Pompeius Quintianus, and can understand how your love for him is increased by your sense of loss; unlike most people who feel affection only for the living, or rather make a show of doing so, and not even that unless they see their friends prospering: the unfortunate they forget as quickly as the dead. But your loyalty is unfailing, and your constancy in love too great for anything short of your own death to end it; and Quintianus was indeed a man who deserved affection through the example he gave of it. He loved his friends in success, helped them in misfortune, and mourned them in death. Think, too, of his honest countenance and deliberate speech, the happy balance he kept between reserve and friendliness, and his enthusiasm for literature combined with his critical powers: think how he lived dutifully with a father very unlike himself, and though an excellent son was never prevented from showing his merits as a man!

But I must not aggravate your suffering, though I know you loved the young man so dearly that you find suffering preferable to silence about him; and least of all do you want silence from me, when I can voice the praise which you feel can do honour to his